

THE LEMON GROVE REVIEW



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Helix High seniors enjoy being volunteer stick boys for Gulls

by Greg Eichelberger

Anthony Sitongia and Chris Roberts have a few things in common; they're both from La Mesa, they're both 17-year-old seniors at Helix High School, both play club roller and ice hockey and they're both stick boys for the San Diego Gulls.

In fact it was Roberts, a part of the organization since he was nine, who brought his friend on board at the beginning of this season.

"I've been a Gulls' fan ever since they were in the IHL (International Hockey League)," said Sitongia, who was featured in a Forum story last year on El Cajon trivia-meister Mike Cook's contests at the Sports Arena.

"Last season, thanks to Mike Cook and Chris, I came to a lot of games. Then, this year, Chris got me this job," said Sitongia.

Actually, it's more of an intern position, strictly volunteer at this point. But, it may pay off later, as he climbs the ladder and works with other professional teams.

Roberts' father, one of the trainers of the IHL Gulls, brought his son to the team in 1989, and he's been there ever since. "This is a lot of fun for me," he said. "Even though I'm not getting paid, it's great to get to know the players and

other people involved with the team.

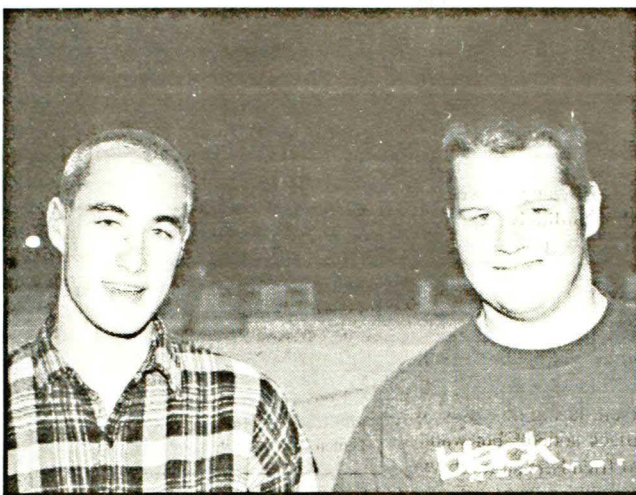
He added that every now and then we even get to take home a souvenir that they don't need.

Arriving on game day about three to four hours before face-off, the two fill all of the water bottles and put out towels, tapes, laundry, Gatorade, jerseys and other implements of the sport.

When the contest begins, they may stay on the bench, providing towels and drinks.

During the intermissions, they straighten the benches, replace sticks and fill water bottles again. If necessary, the two may also be asked to dry the players' gloves with an electric hair dryer-type contraption.

When the game is over they clean up the benches and the locker rooms, collecting the dirty uniforms and making



Anthony Sitongia and Chris Roberts, both seniors at Helix High, are also stick boys for the San Diego Gulls. Photo by Greg Eichelberger

sure every-thing is tidy and ready for the next event.

Playing for the Helix team, and skating at the La Mesa Sports Center, the duo participated in last summer's championship run, losing the final game to El Capitan.

Roberts also joined the Konki Bears, a team that competes out of Rollerskate Land in Chula Vista and is comprised of some of the area's best players.

The Bears even went to the North American Roller Hockey Championships in Vancouver, British Columbia. "My mom and I went up there, and it's a really nice place," he said. "It was also great to compete against some of the best teams in the world."

In addition, he played for the undefeated Helix junior varsity football team, and even joined the varsity squad in time for see them lose to Ramona, 42-40, in the first round of this year's play-offs.

"After high school, I'd like to go to a four-year university where they have a strong ice hockey program," he said. "Maybe someplace like Colorado, Washington or Oregon."

He'd also like to play professionally, but knows that not many scouts will come to San Diego to see him play.

His favorite Gull, MVP goalie Sergei Naumov, has even practiced with him and gave him tips on his game. Both have had opportunities in this position to meet such luminaries as Wayne Gretzky and Sean Bergman.

They also believe that the Gulls, now at 20-3-1, are well on their way to another Taylor Cup title. "The league has gotten a lot stronger, with the addition of Tacoma, Idaho and Phoenix," said Sitongia. "But I can't see anyone stopping us the way we're playing right now."

Almost déjà vu for Shadwell as half-court shot defeats SDSU

by Joe Naiman

Stephanie Shadwell's debut in the Cox Arena Dec. 15 joined a couple of other memorable games in which she played. Shadwell, now a junior on the University of California, Santa Barbara women's basketball team, had won the state championship for Christian High School in 1995 with a half-court basket at the buzzer.

Earlier this year her basket at the buzzer allowed the Gauchos to upset fifth-ranked Florida. This time, against the Aztecs, it wasn't Shadwell, but teammate Stacy Clinesmith, who provided the excitement. Following two San Diego State free throws, which tied the score at 79 apiece with two seconds left on the clock, she shot from her own side of the court, hitting nothing but net for a victory against the Aztecs.

Shadwell played a good game. She hit five of her eight shots for 10 points, and the three East County products in the game combined for 42 points as former Shadwell teammate Alyssa Frederick and Santana graduate Sophia Sledge scored 16 points each for the Aztecs.

Sledge tore the meniscus in her right knee that night, which resulted in arthroscopic surgery Friday and at least three weeks off the court, but overall the local girls didn't disappoint the 975 fans.

The trip to Cox Arena wasn't Shadwell's first to San Diego since enrolling at Santa Barbara, as she had played at the University of San Diego last year. She felt that playing in front of family



Stephanie Shadwell

and friends put some pressure on her to do well. "It's like a good kind of pressure I put on myself," she said.

Although she entered the game with a 5.5 points per game average, she scored the first four points of the game, and Frederick's ensuing basket for San Diego State gave Christian High School alumni the game's first six points. Shadwell also scored the basket late in the second half which reversed a 72-71 Aztec lead.

"She's very steady," said Santa Barbara coach Mark French. "She's very

under control and plays with a great deal of intensity and heart."

Shadwell, the daughter of an attorney for the county of San Diego, spent four years at Christian High School which won the CIF San Diego Section Division V championship all four of her years.

She left high school holding CIF career records with 828 assists and 699 steals and earned Division V co-player of the year honors in 1994, before earning sole player of the year distinction in 1995.

The Patriots had won the state championship in her freshman year, but Shadwell was personally responsible for the team's state title as a senior.

With the Patriots trailing Ripon Christian by a point, Shadwell took the inbounds pass with 3.3 seconds left. "I threw it right when the buzzer went off," she said about that half-court basket.

Shadwell went on recruiting trips to San Diego State, New Mexico State, University of Santa Clara and UCSB.

"The Gauchos were the kind of people I wanted to be with and the friends I wanted to make," she said.

The mission statement of Santa Barbara was also a factor. She said that it kind of connected with her background from Christian High School, learning how to deal with things and helping you to become a better person."

Shadwell said that during practice Coach French often talks to his team about how dealing with difficult situa-

tions on the court will enable them to deal with adversity after their basketball careers are over.

Shadwell has been active in the community outreach. "I cringe sometimes at the role models that exist in sports, but Stephanie's a good one," said her coach. He added that the thing we like about Stephanie is she's a great woman as well as a great basketball player, a great team leader and a great student.

The former Christian star overcame adversity when the Gauchos hosted Florida Nov. 30. She had missed all of her first six shots but was still entrusted with the ball with the score tied at 86, and responded with the winning points.

Shadwell is majoring in sociology with a minor in sports management. She hopes to pursue a career in sports management after graduation.

She didn't play any other sports at Christian High School but spent 10 years in club soccer, playing center-midfield for the Villa Bratz.

Shadwell was a small forward her freshman year at Christian, an off-guard as a sophomore, and a point guard her junior and senior high school years. She plays the off-guard position at Santa Barbara with some point guard duty.

"It was good as far as the ball handling aspect and seeing the court," she said of playing a different position in high school. "On the other side of that I had that point guard mentality of always passing the ball. I'm still struggling with that today; I always pass up shots."

B Words

by Bob Burns

My friend Santa said ...

Having a very special relationship to Santa Claus, I am privileged to relay this message from him at this holiday time. It seems that he was out on his rounds and making visits to schools, and had a special experience right here in Lemon Grove. What he had expected to be routine, turned out to be such a delightful experience, that he wanted to tell about it.

The Alpha Kappa Alpha Head Start Program has a unit on the San Miguel School grounds here in our city, and he happened to be in the neighborhood, so he dropped in. This program has served children from low income families in our East County for the past 20 years. These are all preschool kids or those with special needs. The Lemon Grove program is headed by Ms. Carolyn Clark, a most able staff plus and volunteers.

Santa opined that Lemon Grove must be a very blessed place in that it is so evenly diverse in cultures and would appear to have the most beautiful children in the world. Community support is vital and must be superb in our little town, but, what would one expect in the best place on earth.

The shining faces that greeted him, and their very courteous and happy demeanor, was most exemplary and joyous to behold. Each, in turn, leaped onto his lap to expound their wishes for gifts. None were impossible desires, and most were reasonable. One wanted a "baby sister," another a "dad." Santa has apparently been accurately prescient in his planning for the toys that would be requested this year, at least for the most part.

In these times of materialism, pleasure and even greed, the real spirit of what Christmas is all about seems to fade. But it never strays far, and when Santa asks even these little toddlers, what the true meaning of Christmas is, they know. Of all the splendor and decorations, of all the lavish gifts, and of all the prestigious presents that we attempt to outdo one another, all pale before the real treasures of this life.

They are the children, with their winning smiles, the beautiful hair, the dimples, the animated gestures, and most of all the eyes. They say that the eyes are the mirror of the soul, and the children of Lemon Grove must have the most beautiful souls in the universe.

Santa was most pleased with his visits to the classes at our school, and looks forward to being here again next year. In fact, if Clark does not schedule his visit for next year, she will probably get a lump of coal in her stocking come Christmas day. Little Marissa, or Jose or Michael will be on to a more advanced class, but surely a next Miss Lemon Grove or a Mount Miguel quarterback potential will sit on his lap and whisper in his ear.

He has marked this event on his calendar, for sure ...

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All materials must be received by the Monday preceding the date of publication. The editor reserves the right to edit all submissions.

Advertising

All advertising is subject to current rate card. The publisher reserves the right to reject an advertiser's order. Only publication of an advertisement shall constitute final acceptance. Send all correspondence to: Forum Publications, Inc., P.O. Box 127, Lemon Grove, CA 91946

Community Notes

Tax payers assistance offered by AARP

Tax-aide volunteers from the American Association of retired Persons (AARP) will be available through Grossmont Hospital's Senior Resource Center to provide free tax assistance to low- or moderate-income senior taxpayers.

Appointments are available from Feb. 1 through April 15 and can be made by calling the Senior Resource Center at 644-4214.

Arthritis Foundation suggests gifts

Someone on your holiday gift list probably has arthritis — a group of diseases that affects one in every seven Americans. The Arthritis Foundation San Diego Area Chapter offers several suggestions to help you give special thought to your gift selections for these individuals.

"There are many gifts that can help make life easier and more enjoyable for people with arthritis," said Maggie Watkins, chair of the San Diego Area Chapter's Awareness Committee. "Most of these items are simple and inexpensive. By giving such gifts, you will be letting your loved ones know that you care and understand in a very special way."

The Arthritis Foundation offers these suggestions to help you purchasing gifts for the people on your list who have arthritis.

- **Lazy Susan** — this kitchen organizer can eliminate painful reaching.
- **Double-handled cookware, mugs or bowls** — Kitchen items with two handles allow the use of both hands when lifting.
- **Food processor** — Eliminate painful chopping, slicing and grating.
- **Electric toothbrush** — It is easier to manipulate than a manual toothbrush, and does a more thorough job of cleaning the teeth.
- **Arthritis Foundation Books** — These official Arthritis Foundation publications provide comprehensive information and helpful resources for people with arthritis. The books are available in bookstores nationwide and include: *Your Personal Guide to Living Well with Fibromyalgia*, *Arthritis 101: Questions You Have, Answers You Need*, and *250 Tips for Making Life with Arthritis Easier*.
- **Arthritis Foundation Wellness Journal** — Toward Healthy Living is This spiral-bound journal has pages for writing, scales to monitor one's mood and pain, and inspirational quotes from people.
- **A gift subscription** — What better way to learn how to manage arthritis than with a subscription to *Arthritis Today*, the bimonthly, award-winning magazine of the Arthritis Foundation? A subscription also entitles the gift recipient to a year-long membership in the Arthritis Foundation.

PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE OF TRUSTEE'S SALE File No. 97-059762 Trustee - BA WEST YOU ARE IN DEFAULT UNDER A DEED OF TRUST DATED 3/24/94. UNLESS YOU TAKE ACTION TO PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY, IT MAY BE SOLD AT A PUBLIC SALE. IF YOU NEED AN EXPLANATION OF THE NATURE OF THE PROCEEDINGS AGAINST YOU, YOU SHOULD CONTACT A LAWYER. On December 30, 1997 at 10:00 A.M. Northwest Mortgage Services, Inc., as trustee, 3636 Camino Del Rio North, Suite 200, San Diego, CA 92108, will sell at public auction to the highest bidder, for cash, or cashier's check (drawn and payable at the time of sale in lawful money of the United States as specified in section 5102 of the Financial Code), at the South entrance to the County Courthouse, 220 West Broadway, San Diego, CA 92101, all right, title and interest conveyed to and now held by it under said Deed of Trust in the following described property situated in the County of San Diego, State of California, and all right, title and interest therein, as provided in said note(s), advances, if any, under the terms of the deed of trust, estimated fees, charges and expenses of the Trustee and of the Trust, to-wit: \$116,658.15. Dated: December 3, 1997. Northwest Mortgage Services, Inc., as trustee, 3636 Camino Del Rio North, Suite 200, San Diego, CA 92108, (619) 528-4688, (619) 387-7728. Sales Information By Heather Churchill, TEAM A, Authorized Signatory ASAP295948 12/9, 12/16, 12/23

Diogo, CA all right, title and interest conveyed to and now held by it under said Deed of Trust in the following described property situated in the County of San Diego, State of California, and all right, title and interest therein, as provided in said note(s), advances, if any, under the terms of the deed of trust, estimated fees, charges and expenses of the Trustee and of the Trust, to-wit: \$205,654.29. Dated: December 3, 1997. Northwest Mortgage Services, Inc., as trustee, 3636 Camino Del Rio North, Suite 200, San Diego, CA 92108, (619) 528-4688, (619) 387-7728. Sales Information By Heather Churchill, TEAM A, Authorized Signatory ASAP295948 12/9, 12/16, 12/23

ness of the street address and other common designation, if any shown herein. Said sale will be made, but without covenant or warranty, expressed or implied, regarding title, possession or encumbrances, to pay the remaining principal sum of the note(s) secured by said Deed of Trust with interest thereon, as provided in said note(s), advances, if any, under the terms of the Deed of Trust, estimated fees, charges and expenses of the Trustee and of the Trust, to-wit: \$205,654.29. Estimated Accrued interest and additional advances, if any, will increase this figure prior to sale. The beneficiary under said Deed of Trust heretofore executed and delivered to the undersigned a written Declaration of Default and Demand for Sale, and a written Notice of Default and Election to Sell. The undersigned caused said Notice of Default and Election to Sell to be recorded in the county where the real property is located and more than three months have elapsed since such recording. Golden West Savings Association Service Co., as Trustee, Post Office Box 34957, San Antonio, TX 78265-4957. Telephone Number (210) 543-4968. Sales Status Line (916) 387-7728. Nett Sanders, Assistant Secretary, Date: 12/08/97, ASAP296315 12/16, 12/23, 12/30

NOTICE OF TRUSTEE'S SALE

UNDER DEED OF TRUST FILE NO. 97-059762 Trustee - BA WEST YOU ARE IN DEFAULT UNDER A DEED OF TRUST DATED 3/24/94. UNLESS YOU TAKE ACTION TO PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY, IT MAY BE SOLD AT A PUBLIC SALE. IF YOU NEED AN EXPLANATION OF THE NATURE OF THE PROCEEDINGS AGAINST YOU, YOU SHOULD CONTACT A LAWYER. On December 30, 1997 at 10:00 A.M. Northwest Mortgage Services, Inc., as trustee, 3636 Camino Del Rio North, Suite 200, San Diego, CA 92108, will sell at public auction to the highest bidder, for cash, or cashier's check (drawn and payable at the time of sale in lawful money of the United States as specified in section 5102 of the Financial Code), at the South entrance to the County Courthouse, 220 West Broadway, San Diego, CA 92101, all right, title and interest conveyed to and now held by it under said Deed of Trust in the following described property situated in the County of San Diego, State of California, and all right, title and interest therein, as provided in said note(s), advances, if any, under the terms of the deed of trust, estimated fees, charges and expenses of the Trustee and of the Trust, to-wit: \$116,658.15. Dated: December 3, 1997. Northwest Mortgage Services, Inc., as trustee, 3636 Camino Del Rio North, Suite 200, San Diego, CA 92108, (619) 528-4688, (619) 387-7728. Sales Information By Heather Churchill, TEAM A, Authorized Signatory ASAP295948 12/9, 12/16, 12/23

NOTICE OF TRUSTEE'S SALE Trustee Sale No. 97-059762-A Title Order No. 7098472 Reference No. 6092845 APN 576-451-02 YOU ARE IN DEFAULT UNDER A DEED OF TRUST DATED 3/24/94. UNLESS YOU TAKE ACTION TO PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY, IT MAY BE SOLD AT A PUBLIC SALE. IF YOU NEED AN EXPLANATION OF THE NATURE OF THE PROCEEDINGS AGAINST YOU, YOU SHOULD CONTACT A LAWYER. On December 30, 1997 at 10:00 A.M. Golden West Savings Association Service Co., as Trustee, Post Office Box 34957, San Antonio, TX 78265-4957. Telephone Number (210) 543-4968. Sales Status Line (916) 387-7728. Nett Sanders, Assistant Secretary, Date: 12/08/97, ASAP296315 12/16, 12/23, 12/30

NOTICE OF TRUSTEE'S SALE Trustee Sale No. 97-059762-A Title Order No. 7098472 Reference No. 6092845 APN 576-451-02 YOU ARE IN DEFAULT UNDER A DEED OF TRUST DATED 3/24/94. UNLESS YOU TAKE ACTION TO PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY, IT MAY BE SOLD AT A PUBLIC SALE. IF YOU NEED AN EXPLANATION OF THE NATURE OF THE PROCEEDINGS AGAINST YOU, YOU SHOULD CONTACT A LAWYER. On December 30, 1997 at 10:00 A.M. Golden West Savings Association Service Co., as Trustee, Post Office Box 34957, San Antonio, TX 78265-4957. Telephone Number (210) 543-4968. Sales Status Line (916) 387-7728. Nett Sanders, Assistant Secretary, Date: 12/08/97, ASAP296315 12/16, 12/23, 12/30

YOU ARE IN DEFAULT UNDER A DEED OF TRUST DATED April 12, 1994, UNLESS YOU TAKE ACTION TO PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY, IT MAY BE SOLD AT A PUBLIC SALE. IF YOU NEED AN EXPLANATION OF THE NATURE OF THE PROCEEDINGS AGAINST YOU, YOU SHOULD CONTACT A LAWYER. NOTICE OF TRUSTEE'S SALE UNDER DEED OF TRUST Loan # 165068A/Manning Investor Loan # 2227109 Other # 12021-91 T.S. # NRW047789 A.P. # 577-091-18 Notice is hereby given that Standard Trust Deed Service Company, as trustee, or successor trustee, or substituted trustee pursuant to the Deed of Trust executed by Robert B. Manning and Elena L. Manning, husband and wife, as joint tenants, recorded on 04/20/1994, as Instrument No. 1994-0261413 of Official Records in the office of the County Recorder of San Diego County, California, and pursuant to the Notice of Default and Election to Sell thereunder recorded 11/22/1996, as Instrument No. 1996-093203 of said Official Records, WILL SELL, on 01/31/1998, at the South entrance to the County Courthouse, 220 West Broadway, San Diego, CA at 10:00 A.M. AT PUBLIC AUCTION TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER FOR CASH (payable at the time of sale in lawful money of the United States), all right, title and interest conveyed to and now held by it under said Deed of Trust in the property situated in said County, California, and all right, title and interest therein, as provided in said note(s), advances, if any, under the terms of the Deed of Trust, estimated fees, charges and expenses of the Trustee and of the Trust, to-wit: \$30,597.34. In addition to cash, the tender may without the issuance of the Trustee's Deed until funds become available to the payee or endorsee as a matter of right. Said sale will be made, but without covenant or warranty, expressed or implied regarding title, possession or encumbrances, to satisfy the indebtedness secured by said Deed, advances thereunder, with interest as provided therein, and the unpaid principal balance of the Note secured by said Deed with interest thereon as provided in said Note, fees, charges and expenses of the trustee and the trusts created by said Deed of Trust. We are attempting to collect a debt and any information we obtain will be used for that purpose. For Trustee's Sale information, please call (619) 603-7342. Dated: 12/17/97. Standard Trust Deed Service Company, as said Trustee 2600 Starwell Drive, Suite 200 Concord, CA 94520 (510) 603-1000. By Debbie Jackson Assistant Secretary RSVP 18063 12/23/97, 12/30/97, 01/06/98

CITY OF LEMON GROVE NOTICE ADVERTISING FOR PROPOSALS

Sealed proposals will be received at Lemon Grove City Hall located 3232 Main Street, Lemon Grove, California, up to the hour of 2:00 p.m. on the 27th day of January 1998 for performing work as follows:

PHASE I SEWER REHABILITATION PROJECT CONTRACT NO. 97-29 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The work to be done consists of furnishing all materials, equipment, tools, supervision, labor and incidentals required to complete the above stated project. The work consists of installing approximately 13,733 linear feet of 6, 8, and 10-inch cured-in-place pipe lining, performing 40-point repairs on existing sewer pipelines, installing 4 new manholes and replacing approximately 300 linear feet of existing 8-inch concrete pipe with 8-inch PVC pipe. The bids received will be publicly opened and read at City Hall, 3232 Main Street, Lemon Grove, CA 91945, at the time stated above. Award shall be made by the City Council at a meeting subsequent to the date above set for the opening of bids. The bid package may be examined at the Lemon Grove City Hall, 3232 Main Street, Lemon Grove, CA. Copies of the bid package and the specifications may be obtained by calling Scan Tech, Inc. at (619) 495-0727 and picking them up at 7283-H Engineer Road, San Diego, CA 92111 for a non-refundable charge of approximately \$13.00. The mailing fee is dependent on desired method of delivery. All bidders should direct their questions during the bidding period to Carmen Fink, John Powell & Associates at (760) 753-1120. All work must be completed in 182 days after the commencement date stated in the Notice to Proceed. No bid will be accepted from a contractor who has not been licensed in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 9, Division III of Business and Professions Code. The bidder for this Contract must possess a valid General Engineering Contractors 'A' License. The successful bidder must have a City of Lemon Grove Business License prior to commencement of work. The City Council of Lemon Grove hereby notifies all bidders that it will affirmatively insure that any

contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement for bids, that minority business enterprises will be afforded full opportunity to submit bids in response to this invitation and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, sex, or national origin in consideration for an award. Attention of bidders is particularly called to the requirements of wage rates to be paid under the Contract. It should be noted by all bidders that the current State Prevailing Wage Rate Scale for the San Diego area will be required to be paid by all bidders under the conditions of the Contract. Specifically, this wage scale is the most recent "General Prevailing Wage Determination Made By the Director of Industrial Relations Pursuant to California Labor Code Division 2, Chapter 1, Part 7, Article 2, 3, and 5." It shall be the responsibility of the Prime Contractor to comply with all applicable sections of the California Labor Code including but not limited to Sections 1776 and 1777.5.

The City Council reserves the right to reject any and all bids, any combination of bids, or any information of a bid. Bids must be accompanied by a 10% bid bond as specified in Section I, General Information for Bidders of the documents. No bidder may withdraw his bid without forfeiture of his bid bond within sixty (60) days after the actual date of the bid opening. Prospective bidders are hereby directed to pay particular attention to the applicable section in the specifications for full directions and requirements as to submittal of bids, bonds and agreements.

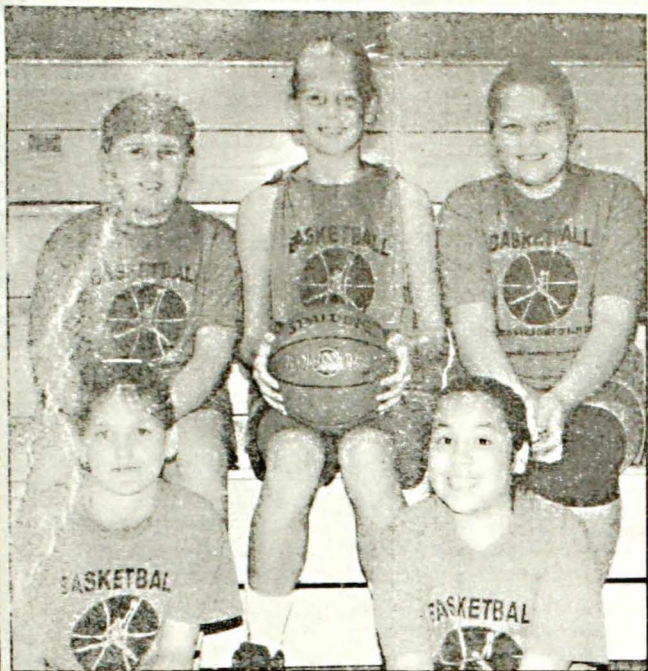
DATE: December 23, 1997
Charles D. Struck
Public Works Director/
City Engineer

The City of Lemon Grove complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you require reasonable accommodations for this bid opening, contact the City Clerk's Office, (619) 464-6934 at least 48 hours prior to the scheduled opening.

Lemon Grove Review
December 23 & 30, 1997

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We are the champions



These 6th-8th grade girls were the champions of the winter 1997 league at the Lakeside Boys & Girls Club. Photo by Greg Eichelberger

Sports Beat

with Greg Eichelberger

Hello again sports nuts. And a Merry Christmas to everyone out there within the sight of this column.

XTRA's loss of the Bolts to KFMB has evidently made some radio folks at that station go off the deep end, especially after Lee "Hack-saw" Hamilton said, over the air, that the Padres had traded Ken Caminiti to the New York Yankees. No one else verified the story. I can only assume Mr. Hamilton is a few kegs short of a frat party.

Now that prep football is over, as well as the Chargers' season, the only thing we have to look forward to is baseball. Speaking of which, El Capitan's Steve Vickery has announced the days of his 14th annual East County Baseball Camp (part one) will be Saturday through Monday (9 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.). Join several area coaches as well as Major Leaguers (who are yet to be announced) as they aid kids six to 18 on the fundamentals of the game. There will also be camps in January (17-19) and February (14-16). For more information, call Steve at 443-9652.

The World Girls Athletic Softball Association will be holding tryouts for its 16-and-under fastball traveling team on Jan. 3 and 4 from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in La Mesa. Contact Rick Matthews (697-5821) for details.

Here's hoping SDSU basketball star Sophia Sledge recovers soon. The sophomore and Santana alum, suffered a knee injury last week in her team's loss to UC Santa Barbara and is expected to miss about three weeks.

Meanwhile, the Aztec men, who had their heads handed to them by #9 Stanford, 63-42, on Dec. 16, came back to defeat Southern California College by 10 at the Cox Arena two days later, moving them to 4-5 on the year.

For those die-hard college football fans who need their fixes, here's a quick rundown of the bowl situation. The names of these events range from the sublime to the ridiculous, for example, the Las Vegas Bowl, featuring ex-Grossmont College QB, Akili Smith, now with Oregon (6-5 vs. 10-2 Air Force) - Dec. 20; the Blue-Gray Classic - Dec. 25; the Aloha Bowl, Michigan State (7-4) vs. Washington (7-4) - Dec. 25; the Motor City Bowl, Marshall (10-2) vs. Mississippi (7-4) - Dec. 26; the Heritage Bowl, South Carolina State (9-2) vs. Southern University (10-1) Dec. 27; the Insight.com Bowl, Arizona (6-5) vs. New Mexico (9-3) Dec. 27; and the Independence Bowl, LSU (8-3) vs. Notre Dame (7-5) - Dec. 28.

Also, the Humanitarian Bowl, Utah State (6-5) vs. Cincinnati (7-4) - Dec. 29; the Carquest Bowl, Georgia Tech (6-5) vs. West Virginia (7-4) - Dec. 29; the Holiday Bowl, Missouri (7-4) vs. Colorado State (10-2) - Dec. 29; the Alamo Bowl, Oklahoma State (8-3) vs. Purdue (8-3) - Dec. 30; the Sun Bowl, Arizona State (8-3) vs. Iowa (7-4) - Dec. 31; the Liberty Bowl, Pittsburgh (6-5) vs. Southern Mississippi (8-3) - Dec. 31; and the Fiesta Bowl, Kansas State (10-1) vs. Syracuse (9-3) Dec. 31.

I'll run down the New Year's Day games next week. Congratulations to the Lakeside Boys and Girls Club 6th - 8th grade girls and the 1st- and 2nd-grade coed teams who claimed winter league titles recently over squads from El Cajon.

The winter East County prep Roller Hockey League concluded last Saturday (results unavailable at press time).

That's about all for this week, and, if you'd like to see you (or your team's) name in this column, just call me at 390-7103 (or E-mail me at ikeforum@juno.com) and I'll do the best I can. Until then have a great sports week and the happiest of holidays.

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East County native handles difficult media job with struggling Chargers

by Greg Eichelberger

Bill Johnston's timing and fortitude have served him well these past 19 years. A graduate of La Mesa Elementary (now a retirement home), La Mesa Middle and Helix High (1976) schools and of San Diego State, he became an intern with the Chargers in 1979.

This was the very season the team began to show signs of greatness that would carry it into two AFC title games over the next three years.

Not everyone likes Bill Johnston, but few can say he is not well-qualified for his job, or respected for his professionalism.

Born at Grossmont Hospital in "The Jewel of the Hills," he's come a long way, surviving and succeeding in a business that holds no corner on longevity.

Since 1990, he has headed the team's the Public Relations Department, which means that everything that goes into or out of the Chargers' camp goes through them, and as director, nothing gets past Johnston.

"All of our community outreach programs, political, governmental and charity work goes through here," said the soft-spoken resident of Jamul. "It's a challenge every day, especially this season, he added."

It began with the stadium controversy, in which team owner Alex Spanos worked out a plan to renovate the Mission Valley venue, both to please the fans and to match the requests of the Super Bowl committee.

When tax advocacy groups caught wind of the deal, they accused the mayor, the City Council, the Spanos' and everyone involved of a "back room, sweetheart" arrangement.

Finally, with the intervention of the Qualcomm Corporation, the situation was saved, except for some lingering doubt about the unsold seat penalty.

That was also partially taken care of when the Chargers and Qualcomm bought out the remaining tickets for all but the final home game and began donating them to local schoolchildren and their families.

If that wasn't enough pressure, the team stumbled out of the gate, and has struggled to a 4-12 record, including dropping back-to-back contests against sub-par Seattle and Cincinnati.

Cincinnati.

"It's never a fun place to work when you're not winning," he said, adding that when your team is successful on the field, everyone is happy and cheerful, but there hasn't been a lot of that this season.

He also claimed that winning brings a degree of harder work to his position. For instance, when the team was on top a few years ago, practically the whole city, as in media, charitable groups, politicians and the like, wanted to hitch a ride on the bandwagon. Consequently, more requests had to be dealt with.

That, in addition to the national news organizations (especially ESPN, Sports Illustrated and ABC's Monday Night Football) began to take notice of the team. Their needs for credentials also brought more pressure to bear on his already over-taxed staff.

It's extra work he would love to have, though. Johnston isn't just a pencil-pusher or bean-counter, however. He has experience on the athletic field.

A standout second baseman and shortstop, as well as a basketball player for the Highlanders, he parlayed that talent into a college career at SDSU, cut short by shoulder surgery at the end of his sophomore year.

He also helped coach both sports at Helix during his sophomore and junior years at State. It was about that time, while working in the Aztec administration office, that he heard a rumor about a possible opening in the Chargers' front office.

After getting the job, he changed his major from business to journalism/public relations.

From his second story office today, surrounded by a staff at his beckon call, collecting a rather lucrative paycheck and dealing with dozens of important and influential people on a daily basis, he recalled that is a far cry from where he began.

"I was collecting newspaper clippings of the team and pasting them in an album for our archives, for minimum wage," he remembered. This was, of course, long before the advent of computer disks and instantaneous data collection. He added that from that, whatever needed to be done, he volunteered for it.



Bill Johnston

He realized, even then, that if he wanted to stick around in this business, he would have to learn as much about it as possible. It's a quality he advises other like-minded individuals to seek. He commented that it turned out that he was able to work his way up with more ease than he thought.

He even took a stint at KCST (now KNDS Channel 7) under Phil Stone in the sports department and spent a year writing prep sports stories for Bill Dickens at *The Daily Californian*, in an effort to hone his writing skills.

Now he deals with chambers of commerce, city officials, National Football League bigwigs and others with an easy-going charm and aplomb that has served him well over the years.

This is attested to by the fact that he still has a job in the media relations department, the first area to see heads roll when things do not go well.

He says that while the position can be stressful, he's thankful for his wife, son and daughter and their quiet home in Jamul, where he can relax and unwind after a 12-hour day in Murphy Canyon.

Of course, after almost two decades with the oft-loved, oft-hated Chargers, he has seen the ups, which included three great seasons (1979-82) and the Superbowl year of 1994, and the downs of the mid-1980s and the present.

"But it's all been worth it," he said. "It's frustrating to get people to realize just what the team means to the city."

He added that it's great to be part of an organization that has a goal, not only to win on the field, but to serve the community.

East County High Schools

Sports Schedules
(as available)

Tuesday, Dec. 23 - Tuesday, Dec. 30
(check with schools for times)

Friday (12/26) - Boys Soccer: Christmas Tournaments. Girls Soccer: Christmas Tournaments. Boys Basketball: Nike National Prep Tournament. Girls Basketball: San Pasqual Tournament. All these tournaments run through the end of year.

East County

Community College schedule
(as available)

Saturday, 12/27 - WOMEN'S BASKETBALL: Grossmont College at San Diego CC Tournament (through 12/29). **MEN'S BASKETBALL:** Grossmont College Holiday Tournament (through 12/29).

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